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March 20, 2012

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Mitchell H. Katz, M.D. *MH Katz*  
Director of Health Services

SUBJECT: **ENSURING CONTINUITY OF CARE FOR RYAN WHITE BENEFICIARIES**

On September 20, 2011 your Board directed the Departments of Health Services (DHS), Public Health (DPH) and Mental Health (DMH) to 1) Notify the Board of Supervisors (Board) before any provider agreements or amendments are finalized; 2) Provide bi-weekly reports to the Board on the status of County efforts to obtain a Medicaid Waiver amendment to offset the additional County costs; and 3) Provide the Board offices with a written Ryan White patient care transition plan and monthly reports on efforts to ensure continuity of care.

#### PROVIDER AGREEMENT NOTIFICATION

On September 30, 2011, DHS notified your Board of its intent to execute amendments to existing Healthy Way LA (HWLA) agreements and enter into new HWLA agreements with seven Ryan White (RW) providers that are not currently part of the HWLA network. On December 21, 2011, DMH notified your Board of its intent to execute Agreements or Amendments with RW providers. DPH will also notify your Board in advance of executing provider agreements related to this matter.

#### EFFORTS TO OBTAIN MEDICAID WAIVER AMENDMENT

The proposed Waiver amendment is still under review by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS).

## **RYAN WHITE PATIENT CARE TRANSITION PLAN**

### Transition Timing

At this time, it is not clear when the California State Office of AIDS, through its AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), will adjust its eligibility screening process to include LIHP eligibility. It is our understanding that patients will be transitioned on a monthly basis, according to birth month, as part of their annual redetermination of eligibility for ADAP.

DPH has communicated to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Office of AIDS, that Los Angeles County will not be ready to begin the transition of patients until at least July 2012. First, we want to ensure that our pharmacy administrator contract (described below) and the accompanying pharmacy network and provider contracts, are fully implemented prior to transition to ensure maximum access for patients and stability for providers. Second, DHS anticipates transitioning HWLA enrollment to the LEADER system in June 2012, and wants to train eligibility workers on the new system before transition takes place.

### DHS Healthy Way LA Contracts

HWLA contracts for current Community Partners (CPs) were updated to include HIV services and add the pharmacy dispensing fee approved by your Board on September 20, 2011. In addition, HWLA contracts were offered to the seven RW providers that were not previously HWLA CPs. DHS made the amendments and contracts available to current and potential CPs for execution by November 1, 2011. At this time, 52 of 53 current HWLA CPs have signed contract amendments. Of the seven RW providers offered new agreements, six have signed.

### Ensuring Access to Pharmaceuticals

Under the leadership of its Chief Pharmacy Officer (CPO), DHS is taking several steps to ensure that medication access is not disrupted for RW patients transitioning to HWLA.

1. Pharmacy Administrator Contract – On February 7, 2012 your Board approved delegated authority for DHS to execute a contract with Ramsell Public Health Rx for pharmaceutical costs, pharmacy dispensing fees and contract pharmacy administrator services. Ramsell and DHS have commenced planning for a contracted pharmacy network for HIV patients transitioning to HWLA.

Full implementation of the network will require additional agreements between clinics and Ramsell, as well as agreements between each clinic and the pharmacies in its individual network. In addition, DHS HIV clinics also have the opportunity to utilize Ramsell services and augment their own pharmacy capacity with network pharmacies.

DHS, Ramsell and each individual clinic will work together on selecting network pharmacies best suited to the needs of the clinic's patients, with a focus on maximizing access. On March 15, 2012, DHS hosted a meeting with Ramsell and HIV providers to explain how contract pharmacy administrator services will work, and the steps clinics need to take to implement their individual pharmacy networks.

2. Ensuring Capacity at DHS Pharmacies – The CPO is working with DHS facility pharmacies to plan appropriately for the needs of transitioning patients.
3. Formulary Assessment – The CPO has completed a comparison of the DHS drug formulary and the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) formulary and discussed results with the medical director for DPH's Division of HIV and STD Programs (DHSP). In addition, the CPO has worked with DMH and DHSP on changes needed to accommodate drugs for mental health care. A process has been determined to review future pharmaceutical formulary requests.
4. Response to pharmacy concerns – On December 12, 2011, County staff, including DHS/DPH, participated in a call with HIV specialty pharmacies to discuss concerns they had related to the transition from ADAP to HWLA. On that call, County staff invited the pharmacies to provide us with information on the services they offer that the County should consider in compensation and contracting. We received this information on February 21, 2012 from one of the pharmacies on the call. DHS and DPH have worked together to review this information and sent a response today. DHS and DPH also have a meeting scheduled March 26 with other HIV specialty pharmacies from the December 12 call.



#### Ensuring Continuing Access to Specialty Care

Currently RW patients access specialty care in the following ways: 1) referral to DHS; 2) through a network of specialists known as the CHAIN network, funded by DHSP and managed by AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF); and 3) onsite at RW provider sites.

DHS has constructed revised HWLA Matched contracts to allow HIV providers to continue to access specialty care through these mechanisms to ensure continuity of care. Specialty allocations for CPs are based on recent utilization through DHSP RW contracts.

HWLA referrals to the CHAIN network will be managed through DHSP RW contracts (with billing to HWLA), and will be governed by the same referral protocols and utilization review procedures currently in place for RW contracts. Only HIV-related specialty needs will be referred to CHAIN, which is consistent with the current RW system.

In addition, DHS continues to decompress DHS specialty clinics and increase access for all patients, including those transitioning from RW.

#### Eligibility Screening and Enrollment for RW Patients

DHS and DPH have developed a process to streamline eligibility screening and enrollment for HWLA-eligible RW patients. Patients will be screened for HWLA during their annual ADAP eligibility screenings, which usually take place at their HIV provider location or an AIDS service organization. These providers will receive training from DPH and DHS on HWLA screening and enrollment. This process facilitates HWLA transition for the patient using providers and processes they are already familiar with.

HWLA resources are available to providers via DHS' HWLA website [www.ladhs.org/hwla](http://www.ladhs.org/hwla), including training videos and materials, all necessary forms and documentation, HWLA brochures, FAQs, and the weekly HWLA enrollment call for all providers and staff. DHS will provide an in-person training for providers the month prior to transition, with an additional follow-up training within the first few months after ADAP eligibility workers have gained some experience doing HWLA enrollment. There are approximately 100 staff identified that will be doing screening and enrollment for this population that will likely need this training.

#### Mental Health

DMH, DHS and DPH worked together to resolve issues related to covered diagnoses for mental health. DHS intends to amend HWLA agreements to remove certain mental health-related diagnoses from the DHS Excluded Services list so CPs will have access to these diagnoses in the DHS claiming system. In addition to previously executed contracts and contract amendments with Northeast Valley Health Corporation, Catholic Healthcare West - St. Mary Medical Center, and Children's Hospital Los Angeles, a mental health services contract has been executed with the City of Pasadena.

#### RW-Funded Contracts

DHS and DPH have determined that a significant portion of Angelenos living with HIV will continue to rely on a mix of HWLA and RW-supported services in order to thrive. To this end, DHSP will amend relevant contracts to deploy linkage and care coordination services not covered under HWLA. These services will be deployed in the medical homes chosen by patients seeking HWLA/RW-supported HIV medical services.

DHSP plans to commence deployment of new contracts for fee-for-service medical outpatient services in the Summer of 2012, as well as new and amended contracts for medical care coordination.

#### Community Communication Strategy

The three departments have developed a communication strategy to ensure that stakeholders are able to access information regarding the HWLA transition. The communication strategy includes the following:

- DPH is working in collaboration with the Commission on HIV to develop materials for patients who will be impacted by the transition to HWLA.
- On January 30, 2012, DHS posted a letter to patients about the transition on the HWLA website. This letter was also distributed to DHS and CP HIV providers for use with patients. A Spanish-language version of this letter has been created and has also been posted and distributed to providers.
- DPH has set up an e-mail account for medical providers to submit their HWLA transition questions. Questions will be answered weekly via a Frequently Asked Questions document, now posted on the DHSP website.
- DHS has created an email address providers can use to submit pharmacy-related questions on the transition.

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- DPH, DHS and DMH have hosted five meetings with providers.
- DHS and DPH have also participated in numerous calls and meetings with pharmacies to answer questions about pharmacy plans for the transition.
- DHS trained HWLA member services representatives to answer questions from transitioning RW clients.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

DHS, DPH and DMH will continue working together, and with HIV community providers, to ensure continuity of care for patients transitioning from RW to HWLA; and will provide ongoing status updates to your Board.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please let me know, or you may contact Wendy Schwartz, Director of Board Relations, at 213-240-8104.

MHK:ws

c: Chief Executive Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors